**Age Ratings - Parent Guide**

A quick guide to what parents need to know

**What are age ratings?**

Age ratings tell us which online platforms, such as apps and websites, are **suitable for different age ranges**. These protect children from inappropriate content and data collection. Most platforms have an official age rating – but these can differ from place to place. For example, Instagram is officially rated 13+, but is rated 12+ in app stores. PEGI’s ratings for games can also differ. It can be confusing, but most age ratings will guide you in deciding which platforms are appropriate.

**Why are some platforms rated under-13?**

These have content suitable for children. Additionally, laws regulate the collection of personal information for under-13s. Many under-13 platforms still need parental consent – for instance YouTube Kids (4+), PopJam (7+) and Minecraft (9+).

**Why are some platforms rated 13+?**

These may feature stuff that’s not suitable for younger children, such as graphic violence or sexualised content. Most popular social media platforms – including Instagram, YouTube and TikTok – are rated 13+. But it’s not hard for younger children to join 13+ platforms. Many ask a new user for their date of birth, but do not require proof.

**Why are some platforms rated 18+?**

These contain age-restricted content – like gaming, alcohol or porn. But many 18+ platforms are accessible to children and young people. Usually this is because they do not verify a user’s age, or have a process that can be bypassed.

**What should I do?**

Familiarise yourself with age ratings and the platforms your child uses. They may be desperate to sign-up to TikTok – but explore the app together first to decide if it’s suitable. If your child does use a 13+ platform, take a look at the privacy settings with them and make sure they know how to block or report a problem. And never just assume your child isn’t visiting 13+ or 18+ platforms. Children are naturally curious, and may be tempted to explore – especially if a platform doesn’t verify their age.

**More Info**

[Listen to Parent Zone’s Tech Shock podcast – discussing age-gating online](https://plinkhq.com/i/1535431770/e/?to=page)

[Read Parent Zone’s guides to popular apps and services](https://parentzone.org.uk/advice/parent-guides)